

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

1 August 1983

China: Reorganization of Security Organs

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Summary

At last month's National People's Congress Premier Zhao Ziyang made public the creation of a new security organ, the Ministry of State Security. The new ministry, headed by security professional Ling Yun, is part of a package of reforms intended to tighten control over security and intelligence bureaucracies, professionalize the security apparatus, and crack down on lax internal security procedures and foreign espionage. The moves were prompted by increasing Chinese concern over crime, espionage, numerous recent hijack attempts, and several defections. We believe the reorganization is also intended to increase Deng Xiaoping's control over the security apparatus and prevent it from assuming too much influence over policy.

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The reorganization apparently leaves China with four major intelligence and security bodies--the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Public Security, the People's Armed Police (a revival of a pre-Cultural Revolution unit), and the Discipline Inspection Committee of the party. The Ministry of Justice will continue to oversee the courts and assume control of the prison system.

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The Institutional Lineup

The Ministry of State Security was formed from parts of the Ministry of Public Security and the Investigation Department of

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Domestic Policy Branch of the China Division of the Office of East Asian Analysis, Directorate of Intelligence. Questions and comments are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Domestic Policy Branch [redacted]

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the party. Its publicly announced responsibilities are to combat espionage and subversion by foreign powers, prevent sabotage, and deal with internal threats to security.

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The Ministry of Public Security's functions, which formerly included a broad range of security and intelligence duties, have been cut back. The MPS is now in charge of combatting general--i.e., nonpolitical--crime and maintaining public order. It is headed by Liu Fuzhi, who like Ling Yun is a longtime security cadre. The Ministry of Justice will supervise the court system and also will take over the prison system, formerly overseen by the MPS.

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The People's Armed Police Force is composed of personnel from four units: the internal security troops of the People's Liberation Army, some border defense troops, municipal firefighters, and some regular PLA garrison troops. Though the Chinese press does not allude to it, an organization with the same name and similar functions existed in the 1950s and 1960s, until its duties and many of its personnel were assigned to the PLA. The People's Armed Police will now handle guard duty at foreign embassies, government buildings and sites such as the flag in Tiananmen Square, and probably party headquarters. It will also be used to control smuggling, patrol coasts and borders--responsibilities shared with the military--fight fires, deal with civil disturbances, and solve crimes. Its charter also includes prevention of espionage and sabotage, a standard part of the litany in official Chinese statements on security. We believe its anti-espionage duties will be confined to guard duty at sensitive installations. According to statements in the Chinese media, it reports to the Ministry of Public Security, although its units seem to have ties to the regional PLA command structures as well.

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The party's Discipline Inspection Committee is not usually numbered among security organization by the Chinese, but some of its responsibilities fall into that area. It has authority to investigate and punish corruption, abuse of office, and political misconduct by party cadre. It has been heavily involved in the crackdown on economic crimes and also in the campaign against Cultural Revolution remnants.

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Reasons for the Reorganization

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In our opinion, Beijing also intends the reorganization to prevent the new security organs from gaining too much influence over policy. Before and during the Cultural Revolution, some top officials engaged in internal security work [redacted]

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[redacted] were able to compile [redacted] 25X1

dossiers on leaders which they used as weapons in disputes and factional infighting. By dividing security and intelligence powers among several ministries, the leadership has indicated its determination forestall such a possibility. [redacted]

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The revival of the People's Armed Police also owes something to Cultural Revolution events. After the Army assumed internal security responsibilities, local units of the PLA frequently intervened in the fighting between factions of that era, and

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ultimately the Army was used to bring the Red Guards' activities to a halt. We believe the new force is intended to prevent the PLA from playing such a role by removing its internal security functions. This new force also advances streamlining of the PLA, a major reform goal, by reducing the number of people on active military duty.

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Tighter Control

The division of responsibilities and appointment of new leadership will probably improve both the performance and political reliability of the security apparatus. We believe it will have less impact on China's intelligence-gathering activities than on internal security--which in our view is of much greater concern to the leadership. Certainly the reorganization measures focused, as far as we can tell, on internal security, not on foreign intelligence.

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The People's Armed Police, however, may be a less effective force than the leadership hopes. The PAP was created essentially by separating PLA security personnel from the Army and redesignating them as PAP. [redacted] they are not happy with their change of status. In addition they have been assigned some extremely unpopular tasks--such as guarding rich peasants, farmers who prosper under the new system. Recruiting and morale are likely to be headaches for the leadership, but they probably regard these problems a reasonable tradeoff for moving toward their other goals.

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The Ministry of State Security, though powerful, does not seem to us to be a "Chinese KGB" despite the similarity in name. It lacks the KGB's sweeping authority in matters of internal security and does not command a large body of troops as the Soviet organization does.

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The restructuring and the accompanying campaign stressing security concerns are likely to have a chilling effect domestically.

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[redacted] Contacts between Chinese and foreigners, already tight, will be even more closely watched. We expect that Chinese officials will be more guarded in their conversations with foreigners, official and unofficial. It will probably be increasingly difficult to gather certain information for business and trade purposes from Chinese fearful of giving away too much economic information and being charged under China's vague and inclusive espionage laws.

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